

From Harem to Zanana to Society **– the struggle of Transgenders and its** **impact on Indian society**

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How Hijrah are known and identified: Hijrah, hermaphrodite, eunuch (castrated man), khawaja sara (the word khawaja sara has Sufi connotations, as it means those who follow the way of the khawaja, master), Sahelis (generally female friend to a female), Urdu begis and other terms connote males converted women. Zenana (Persian: زنانه, Urdu: زنانه, Hindi: झनाना) meaning the word *zenana* is "of the women" or "pertaining to women" and had special connotation in the Mughal period. Though literally, it connoted “produced out of woman”, it changed to “making a man woman”. Thus, *Zenana* contextually refers to the part of a house mainly belonging to a Muslim, reserved for the women of the household. In a bigger complex, the *Zenana* is the inner apartments of a house, in which the women of the family live and the outer apartments for guests and men are called the *Mardana*. Though such exclusive keeping of women is mentioned as “Purdah system”, the Hijras were with the women within *zenana*. Before the advent of Europeans in India, Hijrahs were trusted by society and they were soldiers, guardians of harems and advisors to kings but the Europeans could not understand them and treated them as “criminals” driving them to the periphery of society. In other words, how a new social group was created by the Mughals and the British could be noted. Men, though converted to women were not only treated less than men, but exploited by all means by both men and women.

Eunuchs, castration and production of transgenders in the Middle East and the practice spread to India: Any peculiar practice is evolved out of human society connected with social, political and religious beliefs. The analysis of eunuchry in the context necessarily deals with the Middle Eastern communities. Eunuch is a castrated man i.e, when a man’s genital is removed by operation or otherwise at a singular time or continuous period, he becomes a eunuch. The Arabs called them as “Hijrahs” and “Zananas”. The Arabs / Mohammedans officially employed the Hijrahs / Zananas to take care of harems as they were castrated males, who could not exploit the females sexually, but were able to carry out all the domestic work¹. They synthesized males by

¹ The Mohammedan harems were called Zanana, Zanana Khana and so on. Eunuchs were thus appointed as security guards to the harems and the senior eunuchs were known as Khwaja Sara or Nazirs.
K. S. Lal, *The Moghul Harem*, Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi, 1988, p.56.

castrating Hijrahs at young age and as such, they were neither physically declared as males nor females, however acquiring behavior as expected by the trainer. They also targeted perverted males to join harem deliberately for earning as well as by transvesting their sex to satisfy their mental aberration of becoming a female. They also produced another set of perverted males who were called as *Zananas*, who were basically males having intact male organs, but behave like females with their garments and habits and even they attracted males for sodomy. The Arabs and Mohammedans used both Hijrahs and *Zananas*, who were professionally working as catamites obeying their masters.

Medieval Mohammedanism helped and exploited eunuchs: The exploitation of eunuchs was found from the advent of Islam, up to the beginning of the sixteenth century, in the major centres of Islam in the Middle East [Umayyads (661-750 CE), Abbasids (758-1258 CE), Seljuks (1060-1307 CE), Zengids (1127-1250 CE), Ayyubids (1171-1260 CE) and Mamluks (909-1171 CE) and to some extent, the Fatimids of Egypt (1250-1517 CE)]. The power accumulated by the eunuchs, military, socially and even economically (especially as trustees of financial affairs and property) in the Islamic society had been significant. David Ayalon² finds a close ties connecting it to the harem, the eunuchs and the Mamluks. He points out in all of these three areas, the dominant element had been slaves (Islamized and often enfranchised) who were imported beyond the lands of Islam. The eunuchs were usually the upbringers of the young Mamluks and quite often their commanders. The Mamluks themselves, in various and changing forms, constituted the mainstay of Islam to the harem, the eunuchs and the Mamluks. The same system was prevalent among other Mohammedan groups, carried on and continued in India by the Mughals.

Hijrahs used and exploited for different purposes: The characteristic feature of pan-Islamic expansion had been the extensive usage of hijrahs for many purposes. The medieval Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Hindustani literature had been imbibed with hijrahs of many varieties. They were used as commanders, warriors, servants, assistants, dancers, singers, followers of Sufis and so on. Male chauvinism was controlled through castration and they were effectively exploited for the purpose. The sudden surge of sexual literature, manuals, and medical works during the period has been studied selectively because of the religious aspect attached to it. As the African slavery shifted to Asia, the enslavement and sexual exploitation factors also, changed with the trading groups. Even though, the Mughal and the British rules have gone, their legacies continue affecting the current Indian society. As the Europeans had biased opinion about Mohammedan eunuchs, they recorded their thoughts accordingly³. Many times,

² David Ayalon, **Eunuchs, Caliphs and Sultans: a study in power relationships**, Jerusalem : Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1999.

³ As an Englishman of the late 17th century quaintly expressed it: "*Neither the Moors nor Gentues of accompt admitt theire Wifes or Concubines to gad abroad, but keep them within doors, attended by Eunuchs and younge Girles.*"

See William Crooke, **A New Account of East India and Persia, being nine years' travels, 1672-1681**, John Fryer, 3 vols., London, 1909-1915, vol. I, p. 89.

they could not differentiate between hijrahs and Mughal women⁴, because of the "Purdha system" or covering head and body of the women. Actually, they were not afraid of hijrahs looking at their "loved ones" within harems, as the European travellers comprehended, as they were in fact, safeguarding them.

The Child-lifting, child-trafficking and child-prostitution with hijrah production: The child-lifting during the Mughal period has not been studied properly in the context of gay and homosexual relationships (al-liwāt) existed between the Khilji, Lodhi and Mughal sultans and their friends and companions. Babur was a gay and he enjoyed life with young boys, particularly with "Baburi", as could be noted from "Babur Nama". Castrated hijrahs or eunuchs were considered close confidants of emperors and thus employed as royal servant and bodyguards. As these jobs were so coveted that several parents actually castrated their sons in order to attain favour with the mughal kings and secure employment for their children. This explains how the Child-lifting, child-trafficking and child-prostitution with hijrah production processes were vicious but cyclic in the society. Almost all Mughals used intoxicants for their search for pleasure of all kinds⁵. Their poetry and paintings prove that it was normal during their course of life treated as homosexual relationships (al-liwāt), adultery, and fornication (al-zina). The lesbianism was differentiated in the context, as according to ninth-century Arab physician and philosopher Al-Kindi, lesbianism was a medical condition characterized by itching and condensed vapor generated due to vaginal heat.

Sufis, Sufism and divine relationships: As for as Sufis are concerned, they always enjoyed the company of children and beautiful boys, as reflected in their poems. Sufi ethics came to be known as 'futuwwa', i.e, "young manliness," based on the word fata, meaning "young man," literally a code of chivalry that demanded courage, self-denial, and heroic generosity. Many times, the Sufi literature appeared to have been meant for men, but women too attracted for their wishes of getting marriage, begetting children, happy life and so on. For the sake of God, the Sufis were allowed to keep company with beardless youth and women⁶. Amir Khusro (1253--1325 CE) used to dress the women clothes and dance before his Sufi master Nixzam al-Din Awliya and Musa Sada Sohag (c.1380-1449 CE). Musa Sada Sohag (Sada Sohag = eternal bride) wore women's clothes and bangles through his life and became goddess for hijrahs⁷. Shah Hussayn (1538-

⁴ John Fryer, a contemporary, shared Bowrey's views: "*The Moors are by Nature plagued with Jealousy, cloistring their Wives up, and sequestering them the sight of any besides the Capon that watches them.*" It was not unusual for 17th century Englishmen to refer to eunuchs as capons. Regarding the Mughul women, Fryer felt tempted to assume from "*the number of Spies upon them, of Toothless Old Women, and Beardless Eunuchs, that they are incontinent in their Desires.*" See *ibid.*, vol.I, p. 328.

⁵ Stephanie Honchell, **Pursuing pleasure, attaining Oblivion: The roles and uses of Intoxicants at the Mughal courts**, University of Louisville, Paper 628, 1984, <http://dx.doi.org/10.18297/etd/628>; <http://ir.library.louisville.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1627&context=etd>

⁶ Valerie J. Hoffman-Ladd, **Mysticism and Sexuality in Sufi Thought and Life**, in *Mystics Quarterly*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (September 1992), pp. 82-93.

⁷ Carl W. Ernst, Richard C. Martin (Eds.), **Rethinking Islamic Studies: From Orientalism to Cosmopolitanism**, South Carolina University, 2010.

Musa Sada Sohag reportedly first condemned the practice of women, hijrahs and prostitutes dancing before the tomb of Nixzam al-Din Awliya and started proceeding to Mecca, but on the way, a voice

1599 CE) did not invert gender role but rather inverted sexuality roles through “homo-eroticism” (Shahid-bazi or playing the witness game)⁸.

The Arabic and Persian literature on Sodomy, Catamite, Erotic and related aspects point to sexual exploitation of women and children slaves. Thus, during the Mughal period, the child-lifting and trafficking was order of the day and the slave-suppliers were competing with each other for profits. The Portuguese, Dutch and Danish were also involved in such slave-market, as it fetched more profits than dealing with goods. During Shahjahan's times, the Portuguese had established a factory at Hugli. Portuguese had a very constrictive religious policy. It was learnt that the Portuguese often lifted the orphaned children and converted them to Christianity. This was something objectionable under the rule of a Mughal, who was a devout Muslim. The British administration noted that child-lifting was prevalent during the Mughal period and thereafter⁹, but, they too followed the Mughal legacy¹⁰. However, slowly, the gay and homosexual relationships converted into hijrah production, when they had grown up. Thus, such converted hijrahs were affected much psycho-somatically. The psychological inversion took place effectively through the “Curse of Hijrah” Since the early 1800s, and perhaps long before that, people believed that the hijrah, by virtue of her own impotence, had the power to prevent the birth of male children. If they uttered in the context of the birth celebration, it would cut off the family lineage without any male heir. The hijrahs have been exploiting such fear complex even today, as could be noted in the public places.

The manufacture and import of eunuchs during the Mughal rule: As known, the eunuchs were not born, but manufactured and sold as slaves, during the Mohammedan period and it was practiced by the Mughals also in India. The eunuchs were required-

1. Maintain, serve and safeguard harems¹¹.
2. Required as confidential servants, as bodyguards and take care of the interests of their masters.
3. In the case of eunuchs in the service of a ruling dynasty, they rose to high office and great responsibilities, as in the case of Malik Kafur, the general of 'Alf al-Din Muhammad Shah Khalji of Delhi¹².

questioned him and he returned to the tomb of Nizam al-Din Awliya, donned the dress of woman and danced. Thus his cult of “Sada Sohag”, the eternal bride cult started.

⁸ Scott Kugle, **Sufis and Saints' Bodies: Mysticism, Corporeality, and Sacred Power in Islam**, The University of North Carolina Press, USA, 2007, p.209.

⁹ Bankey Bihari Misra, **The Central Administration of the East India Company, 1773-1834**, Oxford University Press, London, 1959, p.344.

¹⁰ Papers: Slavery (East Indies), ordered, by The House of Commons, to be printed 6 April, 1841.

East India: Slavery, Volume 5, by East India Company, p.116.

¹¹ R. C. Temple, **A Geographical Account of Countries round the Bay of Bengal, 1669 to 1679**, by Thomas Bowrey, Cambridge, 1905, p. 207.

4. Castrated boys were also in demand for purposes of sexual perversion and, finally, castrants played a part in the cult-ritual of certain antominian sects¹³.

The hijrahs / eunuchs imported were called with code words at the time of imports. The harem keepers were also named as "Khawajasara" respectfully, as they were the Superintendents of harems. Khawajas, Khans, Khiljis and others were castrated men produced by the Mughals. How the castration was carried out also explained¹⁴. Generally, beautiful children and young boys were stolen, kidnapped and forcefully carried away during their raids. They were castrated by the hakims and European doctors converting them to Hijrahs by operation / genital mutilation [Sex Re-Assignment Surgery (SRS)]. As they were trained from their childhood and boyhood, they were grown up to carry out tasks and orders of the masters without questioning. Gavin Hambly gives details of hijrahs brought to Mughal Empire through Bengal¹⁵. Actually, boys of Bengal and Orissa were castrated and supplied to Mughal harems¹⁶ implying circumcision, sexual mutilation or the castration was already carried on. In other words, for such an organized slave trade of supplying Hijrahs gangs were operating in the Bay of Bengal, Arabic Ocean and the trans-Atlantic route across Indian Ocean during the medieval period. As for as the "slave trade" was concerned, both the Mohammedans and the Europeans were aiding and abetting with each other¹⁷ even in 19th century. As for as the Indian society is concerned, it could be noted that the parents whose children and boys were abducted suffered heavily at one side and the abducted themselves underwent trauma during their conversion, exploitation and settlement.

Indian high castes reduced to Hijrah status by the Mohammedan castration: Rajkumar interestingly gives the following meanings to Hijrah in Indian context, that too, of "untouchables"¹⁸:

¹² Another outstanding example of a eunuch success story was that of Malik Sarwar, a former slave of Sultin Firuz Shah Tughluq, who first served as vazir under the title of Khwfi a Jahan to both Sultan 'Ala al-Din Sikandar Shfi Tughluq and Sultan Mahmud Nisir al-Din Shah Tughluq, and thereafter became the founder of the Sultanate of Jaunpur, with the title of Sultan as-Sharq (796-802 A.H./1394-1399 A.D.). The Mughul dynasty appears to have employed eunuchs in administrative posts rather less than other Indo-Muslim dynasties, notwithstanding Fryer's gibe that "Eunuchs wedded to their Master's Concerns, were promoted from the dregs of Slavery to Empire .. ." See Crooke: op. cit., vol. II, p. 52.

¹³ For the role of castrants in antominian sects, see the article, 'Androgyny,' with an appended readinglist, in Benjamin Walker: Hindu World. An Encyclopaedic Survey of Hinduism, 2 vols., London, 1968, vol. I, pp. 43-45; also N. M. Penzer: op. cit., pp. 321-325.

¹⁴ R. Nath, **Private Life of the Mughals of India (1526-1803 A.D.)**, Rupa Publications Private Limited, New Delhi, 2005, p.

¹⁵ Gavin Hambly, **A Note on the Trade in Eunuchs in Mughal Bengal**, Journal of American Oriental Society, Vol.94, No.1, Jan-Marc.1974, pp.125-130.

¹⁶ Munis D. Fauqui, **The Princes of the Mughal Empire, 1504-1719**, Cambridge University Press, USA, 2012, p.89.

¹⁷ William Adam, **The Law and custom of Slavery in British India, in a series of letters to Thomas Fowell Buxton, Esq.** Boston: Weeks, Jordan and Company, No.121, Washington Street, 1840.

¹⁸ Raj Kumar, **Encyclopaedia of Untouchables Ancient, Medieval and Modern, Kalpaz Publications**, New Delhi, 2008, p.328.

1. An important Jat clan called Jinjira, Hinjrni, Hinjroon or incorrectly Hijrah tribe indigenous to the Gujranwala Bar. Once a pastoral tribe, perhaps of aboriginal extraction, they won 37 villages in Gujranwala which is their home, but have spread both east and west under the hills/ They claim to be Saroha Rajaputs by origin and they say that their origin came from the neighborhood of Hissar to the Hafizabad pargana in Gujranwala and founded a city called Uskhab, the ruins of which still exist their immediate ancestor were Mal and Dhol, and they say that half of their clans still live in the Hissar country.
2. A eunuch, is also called Khunsa, Khoja, Khalji, Khusra, and Zanka. Formerly employed by chiefs and people of rank to act as custodians of their female apartments and known as Khawja-sara, nawab or nazir, they are still found in Rajaputna in this capacity. In the Panjab also the hijrah is usually a deradar, i.e, attached to dera. He wears bangles on his waits, and other feminine ornaments of dressed in white, he wears no turban, but a shawl, possessions and instigated others to likewise.

In the medieval period, the Jats had been the warrior class people, who fought with the Mohammed Gaznis and Ghoris effectively. Jayapal went up to Gazni and ransacked it. Therefore, important clan of Jats converting to “hijrah” is notable. When the Mohammedans became powerful and dominant, they must have converted them to “hijrahs” and made them serving at harems and Zananas. Similarly, it is unimaginable that Rajputs and Panjabis were “hijrahs” to serve the harems. Therefore, during the period, they must have been castrated to become so. Thus, the mentioned social groups got affected socially, culturally and politically.

Sexual mutilation / circumcision followed in enslaving: Generally, it is noted in history that the children, daughters and sons of Indian rulers were forcefully taken away by the Mohammedan invaders¹⁹. Later, the Mughals adopted the one-way marriages of Rajput women. In other words, no Mohammedan / Mughal woman was given away for marriage to a Rajput counterpart. Actually, the young boys carried away and kidnapped were subjected to sexual mutilation. Young and teenage males were initially foreskin of penis was removed for sexual exploitation by the women. Later, much more serious operation of cutting off the male scrotum, with or without the penis, was carried on only to convert them to Hijrahs²⁰. Though, prohibited as some authorities pointed out, it was certainly carried out to castrate young men and males. Here, the castrations served double purpose of converting Hindus to Mohammedan and as well as into Hijrahs in many cases. The Mughals required thousands of hijrahs to attend to their royal, domestic and military services²¹. Thus, the position of the converted could be assessed with their position.

¹⁹ King Vira Vallala of Hoysala was taken to Delhi and circumcised, thus, he was ostracized by his father and others.

²⁰ William Gervase Clarence Smith, *Eunuchs and Concubines in the History of Islamic Southeast Asia*, http://www.manusya.journals.chula.ac.th/files/essay/Smith_1-19.pdf

²¹ John F. Richards, *The Mughal Empire*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, 1995, p.62.

Why some Mohammedan Sultans had been Hijrahs?: A typical and complete *hijrah* was Sultan Qutbuddin Mubarak Khalji (1316-1320). He occasionally dressed himself in female attire, embroidered with laces and adorned with gems, and went about dancing in the houses of the nobles like a typical *hijrah*. Similarly, Hasan Kangu, the ruler of Malabar, often used to come to court (*darbar-i-am*) dressed in the fashion of females. He bedecked his arms and neck with jewellery and ornaments and used to ask his nobles to treat him to sexual passivity²². In short, the courts of Qutbuddin and Hasan Kangu presented license and obscenity of the *hijrahs* in utter nakedness. The royal enjoyment and exhibition of peculiar habits might be acceptable to the involved groups, but in Indian context, the supportive and ancillary groups affected considerably losing their social status.

How Hijrahs and other transgenders were multiplied during the Mughal rule?: In the polygamous Muslim society some men possessed a plurality of women leaving many other men to remain unmarried, leading the latter to entice, abduct and enslave girls wherever possible as well as to make love to beardless boys (*amrads*) and *hijrahs*. Thus need combined with perversion contributed to the proliferation of *hijrahs*, that is amply reflected in a brief survey of life in Delhi in *Muraqqa-i-Dihli* (Album of Delhi) written by Dargah Quli Khan who visited the metropolis in 1738-39 and often walked through its streets. Like in the fourteenth, in the eighteenth century also, one found in the city of Delhi boys dancing in a world of lecherous sinners soliciting their hearts' desire. *Amrads* were as much in demand as courtesans²³. During and after the decline of the Mughal Empire, *hijrahs* did not remain confined to cities like Delhi or Agra and they spread far and wide but especially where the scions or governors of the Mughals established independent states like in Avadh or Hyderabad. A good number of *hijrahs* are found in Lucknow and in Hyderabad, as well as in cities like Bombay where “composite culture” was there and a respectable presence of Muslims encouraged them.

Hijrahs and the Mohammedan slave system followed: These unfortunate *hijrahs*, who have continued as a legacy of the Muslim slave system, still play a pernicious and parasitical role in Indian society. Their aggressive demand for benefaction makes them detested. There are many negative aspects of Muslim slave system of which probably the *hijrah* is the worst. But in medieval times *hijrahs* were as essential a part of Muslim society as any other section. In Delhi and its environs there are extant a number of mausoleums, called Gumbads, of the Saiyyad and Lodi period. It is an interesting fact that with Bare Khan Ka Gumbad (Dome and Tomb), Chhote Khan Ka Gumbad, Dadi ka Gumbad, and Poti Ka Gumbad, there is also the famous Hijre Ka Gumbad²⁴, which are respected by the hijrah and other communities. The deployment

²² Barani, 396; Afif, 261-62

²³ *Muraqqa-i-Dihli*, Persian text and trs. in Urdu by Nurul Hasan Ansari, 129-34, 192-205 respectively.

²⁴ Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, third ed. 28-29; Carr Stephen, *Archaeology and Monumental Remains of Delhi*, 196-97; *Archaeological Survey Report*, IV, 67ff. XX, 155-58. Also Lal, *Twilight*, 230-31 for other references.

of eunuchs for art and architecture revealed the pattern of usage of slaves²⁵. This was followed during the Mughal rule and thereafter.

After Moghuls, the Hijrahs became jobless: The Mohammedan rule in India started declining in the eighteenth century with the rise of Marathas and the British. The royal and noble harems began to suffer from a financial crunch and many slave girls in these establishments. They left their palaces and mansions as they could not bear the rigours of penury and took up quarters in the cities to fend for themselves. Thousands of eunuch guards of the harems also took to the streets when their services were dispensed with or starvation knocked at their doors²⁶. In their effort to provide means of livelihood for themselves many slave girls adopted the profession of dancing girls and prostitutes and hundreds of eunuchs, thrown out of employment, turned *bhands* and *hijrahs*. Though prostitution is practised the world over, *hijrahs* are a people peculiar to India, as basically, and historically, they were considered to have come down or “descended” from the medieval eunuchs. William Dalrymple noted²⁷ differently that, “...When the Mughal court was disbanded, Muslim hijrahs were exposed for the first time to the other, Hindu, tradition of eunuchry”. In other words, some of them started practicing Hindu culture to satisfy them, as they respected for popular reasons and belief.

The Supreme Court recorded the position between the British Rule and independence: The supreme court noted the condition of hijrahs after the Mughals, during the British period and till 1949 as follows. As it contains the historical facts in the context²⁸: “*We notice that even though historically, Hijrahs /transgender persons had played a prominent role, with the onset of colonial rule from the 18th century onwards, the situation had changed drastically. During the British rule, a legislation was enacted to supervise the deeds of Hijrahs / TG community, called the Criminal Tribes Act, 1871, which deemed the entire community of Hijrahs persons as innately ‘criminal’ and ‘addicted to the systematic commission of non-bailable offences’. The Act provided for the registration, surveillance and control of certain criminal tribes and eunuchs and had penalized eunuchs, who were registered, and appeared to be dressed or ornamented like a woman, in a public street or place, as well as those who danced or played music in a public place. Such persons also could be arrested without warrant and sentenced to imprisonment up to two years or fine or both. Under the Act, the local government had to register the names and residence of all eunuchs residing in that area as well as of their properties, who were reasonably suspected of kidnapping or*

²⁵ Therese Martin, **Reassessing the Roles of women as ‘Makers’ of Medieval Art and Architecture**, Vol.II, Brill, Leiden, 2012. http://art.unc.edu/files/2012/03/ccm3_038275.pdf

²⁶ K. S. Lal, Mughal Harem, p.198, 199

²⁷ William Dalrymple, **City of Djinns**, Penguin 2004, p. 172

²⁸ <http://supremecourtindia.nic.in/outtoday/wc40012.pdf>

Para.12 of the - National Legal Services Authority ... Petitioner Versus Union of India and others ... Respondents WITH WRIT PETITION (CIVIL) NO.604 OF 2013.

The case of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) v. Union of India is a landmark judgment in India that recognized transgender people as the "third gender" and affirmed their fundamental rights under the Constitution. This 2014 Supreme Court decision established legal recognition for transgender individuals and ensured they are protected under equality principles.

castrating children, or of committing offences under Section 377 of the IPC, or of abetting the commission of any of the said offences. Under the Act, the act of keeping a boy under 16 years in the charge of a registered eunuch was made an offence punishable with imprisonment up to two years or fine and the Act also denuded the registered eunuchs of their civil rights by prohibiting them from acting as guardians to minors, from making a gift deed or a will, or from adopting a son. Act has, however, been repealed in August 1949.” Now, this has been taken as an important issue and sophisticated M.Ps like Sashi Tharoor want to bring a private bill favouring the gays and decriminalizing the objectionable section 377 of IPC.

The position eunuchs in 20th and 21st centuries – the British research of Sexual literature: Now, some Muslims try to interpret that there are liberal groups within Islam who support LGBTQ movement. Interestingly, five Islamic countries – Mali, Jordan, Indonesia, Turkey and Albania have legalized gay / homosexuality. As far as religion is concerned, sexuality is connected not just with spirituality, but also with politics, as noted above in the case of Mohammedan rulers of the Middle East. As Momin Rahman observes, *“What is required of us in political situations is an acute sense of justice, but we often ignore or obscure justice when it comes to matters of sex and sexuality. We need to think more clearly about “intimate citizenship,” how the personal, emotional, and sexual dimensions of our lives (which are often locked away as “private”) actually have very public and often political consequences”*²⁹. The colonial research on eastern sexuality revolved around “Kamasutra” type Indian and erotic literature of the Middle East. Here, only, the religious interpretation intruded and they tried to misinterpret to create wedge among the religions.



Attacking gay relations, sodomy under the British rule: The British attacked the Muslims in particular for being prone to the ‘abominable vice’ of sodomy. Anti sodomy law was introduced in Britain in 1860, which reduced the punishment of sodomy from execution to imprisonment, however when enacted in the colonial states like India as Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code it was seen as a retrogressive move. The law states: *“Whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term, which may extend to ten years, and shall be liable to fine”*, with, *“Explanation: Penetration is sufficient to constitute the carnal intercourse necessary to the offence described in this section”*. The Delhi High Court of Delhi on 2 July 2009 declared that the section was unconstitutional with respect to sex between consenting adults. The modern groups hailed it without knowing the background that the British introduced it only based on their religious belief. In fact, the Christian leaders have been consistently opposing the repeal of Section 377 of IPC. The Delhi High Court judgment was overturned by the Supreme Court of India on 12 December 2013, with the Court holding that amending or repealing Section 377 should be a matter left to Parliament, not the judiciary.

²⁹ Momin Rahman, **Sexuality and Democracy: Identities and Strategies in Lesbian and Gay Politics**, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 172.

Complete liberation for transgender – they have long way to go: A study carried on by the All-India Hijrah Kalyan Sabha (AIHKS) revealed that only 1 per cent of society's invisibles were born eunuchs, while the rest had joined the community under duress or for money. Khairali Lal Bhola, Sabha president, informed that most eunuchs in the country were not transvestites or hermaphrodites, but, they were actually castrated men or chibbras. As per their study, Delhi alone has 30,000 hijrahs and about 1,000 youths are converted into eunuchs in Delhi every year³⁰. Now, the Delhi government started giving Rs.1,000/- to them for livelihood. The recent Supreme Court judgment recognized transgender as “third gender” of the society. Based on this, a Bill was also passed in the Parliament on April.25, 2015. Though some of transgender have come out of the stigma and started coping up with the society, majority of them are still exploited by others. The film industry accommodates them, but for sexual exploitation on and off the screens. Of course, they themselves, still, engaged in “begging” and extorting money from the public, as could be seen in the public places.

The hijrahs gatecrash weddings and childbirths, sing lewd songs and make extortion demands. For poor, daily wage earners and other low income groups, they have been the source of enjoyment and they are adjusted with them accordingly. Unless, they are changed, they cannot come out of the exploitative conditions. In north India, they are still exploited sexually, as was done during the medieval periods. On the pattern of Mughal era when eunuchs had an important role in palaces, the third gender populations in Bihar want to be involved in the state's social welfare development projects³¹. Unless, they are changed, they cannot come out of the exploitative conditions, as otherwise, the continued prevailing conditions would liberate them or send them back to medieval period. Here only, the Indian tradition of treating them comes into play for their betterment.

The LGBTQ issue is exploited to target Indian women ultimately: Indian culture, tradition and heritage accept the LGBTQ issues in conditioned situations. The elite Indians picked up the anti-Indian and rather anti-Hindu interpretation in dealing with sex. It was exhibited in films like Randa Penkuttikal (Two girls, 1978), Desadanakili Karayarille (Migratory Birds Don't cry, 1986), Fire (1996), My Brother Nikhil (2005), Dostana (2008) etc., as perceived. But, only “Fire” got publicity, but others unnoticed. Thus, not only transgender or LGPTQ issues get much publicity in the media attracting the youth, but also other issues connected with sex. They are directly or indirectly connected with sex not of unnatural categories, as dealt with above, but also of natural ones. Thus, -

-  virginity is questioned,
-  “Live-in relationship” encouraged;

³⁰ Times of India, ***Eunuchs not always born but made*** Sveta Bhagat, TNN | Sep 5, 2005, 01.03 AM IST.
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/delhi/Eunuchs-not-always-born-but-made/articleshow/1219979.cms>

³¹ Times of India, ***Eunuchs want Mughal era role back***, PTI / Apr 27, 2008, 13:34 IST
<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/patna/Eunuchs-want-Mughal-era-role-back/articleshow/2987565.cms>

👁 juvenile rights are hailed, but the raped victims ignored;

👁 morality is criticized, rape made very big issue;

👁 rights of modern women hailed, but that of traditional women denigrated.

These are not exhaustive, but only illustrative examples. Thus, ultimately, they affect women only.

Conclusion: The LGBTQ issues are taken up as a masquerade to target the factors of Indian culture, tradition, heritage and civilization. Those who want them and their rights should also be protected. The policy of liberalization could work with the educated elite supporting new movements without considering the traditional system of Indian society. The recent “Happy to Bleed” also exhibited such perverted exposure of hidden sex by few girls imbibed with ideology, though, it is not connected with the transgender issue. Thus, not only transgender or LBTQ issues get much publicity in the media attracting the youth, but also other issues connected. It involves with sex of natural ones also encouraging live-in relationship³², excessive portrayal of crimes related to women, defaming India for all modern day westernized aberrations and social evils. Therefore, the following points should be kept in mind, in dealing with issues connected with women of any nature:

1. Indian society has been caught between tradition and modernity under the LPG regime, thus women face modern issues.
2. Indian women have been the target of aggressive marketing agencies of US and EU companies to sell their products and services.
3. At the same time, Indian women could provide “soft skills” in software, designing (of textiles, domestic electric appliances etc), art and architecture and other fields and thus, they want to exploit them maximum.
4. As more and more are engaged in LPG services, the Indian women have to forget their family, which has been now reduced to husband and wife, then “Live in relationship”.
5. Thus, “modern day coolies” have been created with payment of huge salaries and making them to enjoy life as far as possible forgetting the traditional life pattern etc.
6. The rights Indian women cannot be valued, determined and assessed with non-Indian scales and instruments, as the parameters differ in religious, social, economic and political contexts.

³² The Supreme Court in the Indra Sarma vs. V. K. V. Sarma (November 26, 2013) and Lalita Toppo vs. State of Jharkhand & Anr. (October 30, 2018) also played an important role in defining live-in relationships in India, however, they pose challenges to the establishment of comprehensive property rights, the judiciary has played a crucial role in safeguarding the rights of partners in live-in relationships.

7. Even advertisements and media have been orchestrated to convert them as women of US and EU (with Americanized culture) working at one side and claiming all sorts of rights at other side, questioning Indian culture, tradition, heritage ad civilization.
8. Thus, the modern festivals – Valentine day, Mothers Day, Fathers Day, etc., are replacing Indian festivals. Conceptually, they have been there, but misinterpreted differently (as if they belong to one particular religion).
9. Though, secularism is talked about, the secularization of social, economic, legal, and other processes are not secularized for all Indian women.
10. As long as “personal laws” are to be kept sacred by differing social groups, the secularization of judicial processes get affected even in “secular” polity, as the societies are “communal”!